

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 9629

E.O. 11652: GDS
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SUBJ: UPCOMING VISIT OF PRES GISCARD D'ESTAING TO IRAN, OCT 4-7

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO OUR INFORMATION HERE, UPCOMING VISIT OF PRES GISCARD D'ESTAING LIKELY TO PRODUCE ANNOUNCEMENT OF SOME NEW STEP IN NUCLEAR PLANT COOPERATION AGREEMENT AS WELL AS PROGRESS ON SOME OTHER ECONOMIC PROJECTS, AS CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF CLOSE AND IMPROVING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IRAN AND FRANCE. LONG TOURS D'HORIZON LIKELY BETWEEN TWO CHIEFS OF STATE ON WORLD ISSUES INCLUDING MIDDLE EAST (LEBANON), INDIAN OCEAN, SOUTH AFRICA, SOUTH ASIA, AND NORTH-SOUTH ECONOMIC RELATIONS. FRENCH HERE TELL US THERE IS NOTHING NEW LIKELY IN MILITARY FIELD, DESPITE RECENT VISIT HERE OF FRENCH COS. END SUMMARY.

1. GISCARD'S STATE VISIT WAS ANNOUNCED SEPTEMBER 21 AND FRENCH EMB TELLS US LOCAL MEDIA BEING FED APPROPRIATE MATERIALS TO PREPARE PUBLIC OPINION FOR WHAT BOTH SIDES EXPECT TO BE AN IMPORTANT FURTHER STEP IN MUTUALLY IMPROVING RELATIONSHIP. FRENCH EMB FIRST COUNSELOR BRIEFED POLCOUNS ON VISIT SEPT 23. HE SAID GISCARD INTENDS SPEND MOST OF HIS TIME TALKING WITH SHAH AND
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SEVERAL SESSIONS ARE BEING SCHEDULED. ONLY VISIT OUTSIDE

TEHRAN WILL BE ON OCTOBER 6 TO TOMB OF CYRUS NEAR SHIRAZ.

2. TOUR D' HORIZON OF POLITICAL TOPICS EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE WOULD, ACCORDING TO FRENCH EMB, INCLUDE SITUATION IN MIDDLE EAST, PARTICULARLY THE LEBANON, IN WHICH FRENCH AND IRANIANS ARE CONSIDERABLY INTERESTED. ALSO SITUATION IN INDIAN OCEAN AND IN SOUTH AFRICA., LATTER BEING A TOPIC WHICH INCREASINGLY INTERESTS THE SHAH. IRANIAN RELATIONS WITH SOUTH ASIAN NATIONS LIKELY TO BE TOUCHED ON, IN CONTEXT OF GENERAL DISCUSSION OF WORLD POLITICS IN WHICH IRANIANS VIEW THEMSELVES AKIN TO FRENCH AS MIDDLE-SIZED POWERS WITH IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY.

3. SPECIFICALLY, FRENCH EMB HOPES VISIT WILL PRODUCE SOME FURTHER STEP ON NUCLEAR POWER ACCORDS (FOR IRANIAN PLANTS 3 AND 4), POLITICAL FRAMEWORK AND LETTER OF INTENTION ALREADY EXIST. SPECIFIC CONTRACTS LIKELY TO TAKE MORE TIME TO NEGOTIATE, BUT SOME IN-BETWEEN STEP POSSIBLE, SUCH AS NEW AGREEMENT ON WHERE PLANTS TO BE LOCATED, ETC.

4. ACCORDING TO FRENCH COUNSELOR PROGRESS IS POSSIBLE ON SEVERAL OTHER LARGE PROJECTS IN THE ECONOMICS FIELD, SUCH AS RAILROAD, ROADS, AND OTHER TRANSPORTATION ITEMS, THOUGH NO SPECIFIC NEW STEPS ENVISAGED ON TEHRAN SUBWAY SYSTEM SINCE IT IS ALREADY IN THE PRELIMINARY SURVEY STAGE SCHEDULED TO LAST TWO YEARS. NORTH-SOUTH ECONOMIC-COMMERCIAL RELATIONS AND CURRENT IRANIAN IDEAS ON BARTERING OIL FOR INCREASED TRADE WILL PROBABLY FIGURE TO SOME DEGREE IN THESE DISCUSSIONS, THOUGHT GISCARD IS ARRIVING ON A CONCORDE, FRENCH DO NOT EXPECT ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT ON CONCORDE AIRLINER SALES. IN ADDITION TO FONMIN, GISCARD WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, AND MINISTER OF "EQUIPMENT" (PUBLIC WORKS). MINISTER OF YOUTH AND SPORTS ALSO COMING ALONG, THOUGH FRENCH COUNSELOR ADMITTED TO US HE WAS NOT CLEAR WHY.

5. FRENCH COUNSELOR SUGGESTED NUMBER OF SMALL DIFFICULTIES IRANIANS ARE CURRENTLY RAISING WITH ON-GOING NEGOTIATIONS IN VARIETY OF ECONOMIC FIELDS MIGHT BE DROPPED BY THEM IN CONTEXT OF THIS VISIT TO DRAMATIZE ITS RESULTS.

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6. DESPITE RECENT PRESENCE HERE OF FRENCH ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF (TEHRAN 9508) FRENCH COUNSELOR SAID THERE WERE NO REPEAT NO NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN MILITARY FIELD. HE WAS SOMEWHAT TAKEN ABACK WHEN POLCOUNS BROUGHT TO HIS ATTENTION ANNOUNCEMENT IN FARSI PRESS SEPTEMBER 23 THAT ECONOMICS MINISTER ANSARY IS SCHEDULED TO BE IN MANILA OCTOBER 4-8, DURING GISCARD'S VISIT. HE RECOVERED SUFFICIENTLY TO SUGGEST

THAT PRIMIN HOVEYDA ALSO FOLLOWS ECONOMIC AFFAIRS CLOSELY AND
COULD ASSIST SHAH IN ECONOMICS FIELD DURING VISIT.

7. COMMENT: GISCARD TRIP RECIPROCATES STATE VISIT BY
SHAH IN 1974. ADDRESSEES WILL RECALL CONTRETEMPS WHICH
OCCURRED IN CONNECTION WITH 1971 IRANIAN 2500TH
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, WHEN PRES POMPIDOU ABRUPTLY CHANGED
HIS MIND ABOUT COMING AND INFORMATION TO THAT EFFECT GOT
TO THE SHAH THROUGH THE PRESS BEFORE FRENCH HAD A CHANCE
TO EXPLAIN POMPIDOU'S REASONS THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS.
DAMAGE HAS SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN REPAIRED BY SERIES OF VISITS,
INCLUDING A SUBSEQUENT STOPOVER BY POMPIDOU IN IRAN AND SEVERAL
TRIPS BY EMPRESS FARAH TO FRANCE. INVITATION TO SHAH IN 1974 WAS
THE VERY FIRST ISSUED FOLLOWING GISCARD'S ELECTION TO PRESIDENCY
AND RESULTED IN ANNOUNCEMENT OF MAJOR AGREEMENTS BETWEEN TWO
COUNTRIES, SUCH AS NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS, TEHRAN SUBJWAY, GAS
OPERATED STEEL MILL, AND JOINT UNIVERSITY. BUSY AS HE IS, PRES
GISCARD D'ESTAING PROBABLY DID NOT FEEL HE COULD POSTPONE
RECIPROCATING THIS VISIT WITHOUT RISKING A BLOW TO ROYAL
FAMILY'S FEELINGS. IT WOULD APPEAR LIKELY THAT BOTH
SIDES DESIRE SOME NEWS-CATCHING ANNOUNCEMENT AS A RESULT
OF GISCARD'S VISIT. FURTHER PROGRESS ON THE NUCLEAR
COOPERATION AGREEMENT WOULD FIT THE BILL ON THAT ACCOUNT.
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